

## B.E.A. to Berlin . . . . .

is followed by two more trips and a "36." This schedule is maintained until, after 13-14 days, the crew is sent home on five days' leave. In addition to ten R.A.A.F. crews under S/L. Greenwood, a number of S.A.A.F. pilots are operating. The senior air traffic controller is F/L. Allenby, who has dispensed, we noticed, with telephones in the control room. These often prove a serious handicap to the officer on duty.

Having been present at Horsham St. Faith when the eight Meteors, with two Halifax tenders, left for Denmark recently, we were especially interested to see one of the Halifaxes come into Lübeck on its return trip. The Meteors had passed through on the previous day. We wondered if the Halifax pilot appreciated the risk he was running in parking his machine with the civil Dakotas; it would hardly have been surprising if the Army had descended on the machine and stuffed it with flour sacks.

To Capt. T. Freer, of Westminster Airways, and Capt. Bover, of Air Transport Charter (Channel Islands), Ltd., we were indebted for lifts back to Gatow during the afternoon. Capt. Freer's radio operator told us that on the preceding trip Dakota G-AJAZ had met four Yaks some fifteen minutes before reaching the Frohnau beacon. The fighters passed below, and Capt. Freer warned the W/O. to observe the proceedings from the astrodome. One Yak was seen to detach itself from the formation and close in on the Dakota's tail until it was "two or three Dak. lengths" astern, finally breaking away below.

On our own trip, with some twenty minutes to go to the Frohnau beacon, we heard prop ice impinging on the fuselage, leading Captain Freer to remark that weather is likely to be the principal factor affecting the continuance of the air lift from Lübeck on its present scale. Hangar accommodation is seriously inadequate, and the bitter winter winds will inevitably tell on the maintenance staff.

We had already been cleared at the 20-mile check point to descend to Angels 2, and were, in fact, nearing the Frohnau beacon, when someone was heard to remark,

### FROM D.H.'s CAMERA

SIR GEOFFREY DE HAVILLAND is not unknown as an entomologist—hence the names of a line of aircraft starting with the famous Moth—but few people know that another absorbing interest in life for him is to take a camera on safari into the game reserves of Africa.

At the Ilford Gallery, 101, High Holborn, London, W.C.1, there is now open an exhibition of his big-game photographs. The pictures are superb and most varied. Elephants, lions, giraffes, rhinos, zebras and various buck are all portrayed singly and in groups—sometimes from as near as 15 yards.

In addition to big game there are also excellent close-ups of local inhabitants—some being very attractive!; and a number of interesting shots of birds and a swarm of locusts in Kenya.

The photographic quality is excellent, and for those interested, the lens, shutter speed and aperture are indicated on many of the pictures.

The exhibition, open until November 30th, is free.

### THE STAR TIGER MYSTERY

THE disappearance of the B.S.A.A. *Star Tiger*, H-AHNP, on January 30th, 1948, on a flight from the Azores to Bermuda, remains as deep a mystery as ever in spite of all the efforts of the Court of Investigation ordered by Lord Nathan while he was Minister of Civil Aviation, and presided over by Lord Macmillan. The Court's report was issued as a White Paper (Cmd. 7517). It runs to 46 pages plus appendices.

All possible evidence was collected by the Court, but nothing emerged which could give a clue as to the actual cause of the disappearance of the aircraft. Many possible causes were considered and evaluated; they were divided into those which could be eliminated and those which could not. But even in the case of the latter, the report states that "the Court has not been able to do more than suggest possibilities, none of which reaches the level even of probability." It concludes: "What happened in this case will never be known, and the fate of *Star Tiger* must remain an unsolved mystery."

*Star Tiger* left Bermuda at 3.34 p.m. on January 29th, having been preceded by another B.S.A.A. machine, a

apropos Russian aircraft, that he was not sure whether to keep his eyes skinned or shut. By keeping our own open we were rewarded by the sight of a vic of three Pe-2s closing in from port a few miles ahead. They turned to bring themselves more or less on our track, and as they slowly drew away, cruising, we judged, at some 160-170 knots, the number three machine of the formation started to emit a very noticeable smoke trail from its starboard engine. As these twin-engined attack bombers left us a red-starred LI-2 (Russian Dakota) crabbed below our machine, presumably on its way in to Schönwalde.

Back at Gatow, some difficulty was experienced in taxiing, a York having burst a tyre on the link track. Such casualties are not allowed to interrupt for long the flow of aircraft to and from the hard-standing area, and in an hour or so the track was free. Once again we found the Tudor I. Yesterday, said Captain Store, he had managed to get in four trips, carrying 20,600 lb of bean flour on each.

In the little time remaining we looked in at the Gatow Malcolm Club, where Miss Mary Dyson told us how the canteen detachment on the airfield is giving 24-hour service. Each evening five telephone calls to England are available to "other ranks" at 5s. We also noticed before leaving C. tow the two Avro 19s maintained by the Comm. Flight, one for R.A.F. use and one for the C.C.G.

Airborne on the return trip in Viking *Verily*, Captain P. A. Dorehill was so kind as to send word by the steward that we were free to go forward. Flying up the left side of the Elbe the Viking's position was reported to Bad Eilsen, and we were soon turning above Harburg to approach Fuhlsbüttel over vast tracts of devastation, forming, in the rainy gloom of approaching night, as depressing a scene as we could recall. Incongruously, a few white-sailed yachts were manoeuvring.

At 10,000ft, having cleared Hamburg on the final leg, and after a first-rate B.E.A. dinner of meat, salad, flan, cheese, pickles and coffee, we awaited the first signs of London. The steward switched off the cabin lights to allow the luminous grandeur to be fully appreciated, and we thought of the darkness two hours' flying behind us.

Lancastrian, which took off at 2.22. The Lancastrian reached its destination, but the last signal from *Star Tiger* was sent out at 3.15 a.m. the next morning, after which nothing more was heard of or from it. Both flew at about 2,000ft. During the flight the wind conditions did not correspond with those forecast and there was a fairly large northerly drift.

The Court criticizes the wireless operator at Bermuda for failing to declare an emergency until 95 minutes after the last contact with the aircraft. "His attitude during the 95 minutes following lack of contact was not consistent with the spirit in which an Air Guard should approach his duties."

Certain recommendations are made by the Court, all of which have been dealt with by B.S.A.A. "Most of them were put into effect before the enquiry opened," a Corporation statement claims. This would rather tend to show that the Corporation was aware that certain aspects of the operation of the route were open to improvement.

### BUTLIN'S AIR RALLY SEASON ENDS

INGOLDMELLS field at Skegness was the venue of air guests attending the last Butlin weekend of the season. A representative gathering of private pilots and their crews spent a pleasant weekend—September 25th-27th—at the camp, and, due to the eleventh hour withdrawal of Service aircraft support, virtually provided their own air meeting for the entertainment of the campers and other visitors on the Sunday afternoon. In spite of the high wind, drops were made from a balloon-hoisted cage, the balloon men from Cardington being accompanied by their C.O., G/C. J. Bradbury, D.F.C. Instructors from No. 1 Parachute Training School, Upper Heyford, and men of the 16th Airborne division of the Bradford Territorials made the jumps. They were commanded by Col. G. H. Lea of the 12th Yorks Battalion and S/L. Blythe of No. 1 School. Capt. A. MacBain gave an excellent commentary. In addition, there were height and speed-judging competitions, a treasure hunt, spot landing contest and an aerobatic display. A photograph appears on page 428.

A large number of flying people have enjoyed Mr. Butlin's hospitality at one or more of his camps during the year, and they will look forward to meeting again during the 1949 season.